

REMARKS

Claims 156 - 181 remain pending in the present application. No amendments were made by the present response. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the following discussion.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 156-181 were rejected under 35 USC §103 over **Shear** (USP 4,827,508) and, apparently, **Nozawa** (USP 5,235,641) (the Office Action's reference to Smid USP 4,386,233 appears to be an error since the detailed explanation of the rejections never referred to Smid). It is submitted that nothing in the prior art, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all the features recited in the present claimed invention.

For instance, independent claims 156 and 169 recite supplying the user with a plurality of utilization keys that correspond to different tasks. With regard to this claimed feature, the Office Action referred, e.g., to column 5, lines 21 – 23; lines 42 – 45; and lines 51 – 56 of **Nozawa**. However, it is submitted that at least this claimed feature is not taught or suggested in the cited prior art. A discussion of the disclosures of **Nozawa** follows.

Column 5, line 10 – Column 6, line 19 describe the operation of storing data from the upper rank apparatus in magnetic tape.

This is a writing process. In this process, the upper rank apparatus 1 generates a raw data key (column 5, line 25). The raw data key is encrypted into an encrypted data key (line 41). The encrypted data key is written into a header portion or the like in the magnetic tape medium (lines 47 – 49).

On the other hand, the raw data key is set to the storage mechanism 8 of the magnetic tape controller 2 (lines 51 – 56). Then, the upper rank apparatus sends out write data to the magnetic tape controller 2 (column 5, line 68 – column 6, line 2).

The data is encrypted with the raw data key set in the data key storage mechanism 8 (column 6, lines 11 – 14). The encrypted data is written into the magnetic tape medium.

After completion of the predetermined write processing, the raw data key is erased from the data key storage mechanism 8 (column 6, line 25).

Note that the key is kept at the header portion or the like in the magnetic tape medium in the form of the encrypted data key.

Column 6, line 32 – Column 7, line 27 describe the operation of reading data encrypted and stored in the magnetic tape by the upper rank apparatus.

In this process, first, the upper rank apparatus 1 gives an instruction to read (column 6, line 36). Then, the encrypted data key is read from the magnetic tape medium (line 42).

The encrypted data key is decrypted into a raw data key which is just the same key used in the writing process. And, the raw data key is transferred again to the data key storage mechanism 8 (lines 56 – 60).

Then, the encrypted data read out from the magnetic tape device is decrypted with the raw data key (Column 7, lines 14 – 16). The restored/decrypted data is sent to the upper rank apparatus.

Upon completion of the reading, the raw data key is erased from the data key storage mechanism 8 (lines 28 – 33).

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From the discussion above, as well as from a detailed review of the cited prior art, it should be emphasized that the cited prior art only discloses a raw data key being used when upper rank data is written into and read from the magnetic tape. The encrypted data key is the same key as the raw data key. The encrypted data key is not usable unless it is decrypted. More importantly, nothing in the cited prior art describes the raw data key as designating or corresponding to one of different tasks. There is simply no disclosure of any plurality of utilization keys that correspond to different tasks. For at least these reasons, the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over the prior art. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement was previously filed on November 10, 2003. Consideration of the cited reference and return of a signed PTO/SB/08 is respectfully requested.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully Submitted,

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